**North Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative (NALCC) Informatics Needs Assessment (9/14/2011)**

**Process Steps:**

1. Assemble a small team **(almost complete)** to select and work with contractor; review work done by a contractor
2. Write up scope of work
3. Determine an appropriate contractor **(some contacts made)**, either through FWS or external channels
4. Put contract in place; set time line for completion
5. Hold meetings/calls to start process, monitor progress, and review deliverables
6. Once needs assessment has been completed, and most important needs identified, evaluate who is best suited to meet those needs
7. Draw up plan to address needs

**Scope of Work Outline:**

1. Review existing materials and relevant literature on needs assessments
2. With input from NALCC team, develop list of questions to ask stakeholders (see below)
3. Interview/survey stakeholders
4. Follow up with stakeholders if necessary to get as complete a response as possible
5. Based on survey, evaluate most important data/information needs that are unmet

**Highest Priority (in order) Information Management (Informatics) Projects Identified at “Albany II” (keeping in mind there is some considerable overlap with categories like Habitat Mapping):**

1. Support and engage in the forthcoming regional information management needs assessment that was identified as a top priority LCC science need. Engage all the conservation community in this process, with the goal of making better decisions.
2. Develop a way for states, LCCs and other partners to immediately access the habitat mapping and geospatial condition analysis products coming out of the RCN process **(started by putting NE Terrestrial Habitat Classification data on FWS FTP site)**.
3. Support development of SWAP database to promote consistency in next generation of SWAPs, allow easy State rollup, guide revisions and improve accessibility **(current funding consideration for NALCC/RCN)**.
4. Easy access to information for policy makers in Congress - outreach and advocacy for that audience, e.g. Value of basic monitoring data is not always known until there is a problem - translation of value of basic science for lay audience.
5. Create regional geospatial database that can be shared and used among all parters (states, ACOE, USGS, USDA, FWS, NGOs…) to integrate existing databases (states, NatureServe…) to identify activities on the ground. Include terrestrial, aquatics, and marine species linked with habitat. Goal of action and set of target species for action should also be included. Not meant to be fully inclusive of all data, but is targeted to habitat management.
6. Create data sharing agreements between all members of NE conservation community - state, federal, ngo - AND get their data.

**Questions to be answered through a Needs Assessment:**

* Who:
  + Who needs the information?
    - What are their levels of expertise?
  + Who will develop the information?
    - Are the personnel in place to do it?
  + Who will store the information?
    - Is the necessary infrastructure in place?
    - Is some of the information already available and distributed?
  + Who will distribute the information?
    - Is the necessary infrastructure in place?
* What:
  + What data are needed?
* Where:
  + Where will the information be stored?
  + Do the data have a geographic location?
* When
  + What is the timeline for implementation of Informatics system?
* How:
  + How does the information need to be distributed?
    - E.g., Browser-based maps, Google Earth, Web data service, GIS file download?